

The Mickey in Macy's Window:  
Childhood, Consumerism, and  
Disney Animation

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Walt Disney's Mickey Mouse films emerged against the backdrop of a complex set of debates about children's leisure and the role of the cinema in children's lives. During the late 1920s and early 1930s the cinema's address to children was contested ground and a matter of frenzied concern. Reformers denounced the movies' influence on children and mounted well-organized efforts across the country to regulate and control this aspect of children's leisure. One particularly important aspect of these efforts involved the creation and supervision of a canon of films for children. Reformers asked whether a given film addressed the young moviegoer as a "true" and "proper" child.

Disney's films entered and achieved a privileged position in this canon of films for children. In Mickey Mouse, the cultural interests of children, the business interests of the film industry, and the political and cultural interests of reformers seemingly merged. And today, something like a sacred connection exists between Mickey Mouse and idealized childhood. However, as the occasional early references to Mickey's vulgarity attest, that connection was by no means natural or unproblematic. It was the result of a particular historical work, a work that I want to begin to examine in this essay.

My focus here is not so much on the films themselves as it is on the marketing and merchandising strategies that "sold" the cartoons (and the characters) to children and assured reform-minded adults that this was a healthful purchase. It is at this level that we see the most explicit and emphatic attempts to assure Disney animation's uncontested address to children.

My title's reference to Charles Eckert's famous article, "The Carole Lombard in Macy's Window," gives an indication of the direction of my

gument. In that article, Eckert describes a significant transformation in the American film industry. From the late 1920s to the middle 1930s, there was an intensification and rationalization of the process through which films were linked to consumer goods. Such organizations as Hollywood Fashion Associates and the Modern Merchandising Bureau emerged to coordinate the display of fashions in Hollywood films and fan magazines, with the subsequent production and marketing of those fashions to the public. And the studio exploitation departments systematically began to conceive of story ideas and scripts as opportunities for a wide range of creative product tie-ins. For Eckert these developments consolidated the cinema's role as a force in the rise of American consumerism.<sup>1</sup>

The period Eckert discusses coincides with the period of Mickey Mouse's ascendance as a commodified cultural icon. Although Eckert does not mention Disney, it is well known that the Disney Company was at the forefront of these innovations in the early 1930s. Much popular writing on Disney has described the merchandising of Mickey Mouse, at least described the results of that merchandising—a vast array of dolls, toys, clothing, and novelty items produced from 1930 on, and sold to an appreciative and generally young public. Unfortunately, to my knowledge, none of this work has attempted to place Disney's efforts in the context of the industry's broader efforts; nor has it related those efforts to issues of spectatorship or consumerism.

Several scholarly works, by contrast, have followed from Eckert to produce compelling arguments about the relations between film and consumerism in the first decades of the century. This work however, like Eckert's, has ignored Disney, in large part, no doubt, because it has concerned itself with consumers other than children. The situation beyond film studies, in the fields of social and cultural history, is much the same: a body of knowledge about the rise of consumerism but very little on children's participation in that process.<sup>2</sup> In short, a kind of gap exists in the research, a gap that prevents us from thinking as clearly as we might about Disney animation's address to children and particularly its address through the mechanisms of consumerism.

We should begin by distinguishing between two different registers of consumption that tied the child to the cinema.

First, the child was a consumer of films, someone who paid a certain amount to see a show. Second, the child was a consumer of products displayed through films. The system of merchandising and promotion employed by Disney and the other studios in the early 1930s worked by creating elaborate networks of mutual reference between these two registers of consumption.

Particularly elaborate networks formed around Mickey Mouse. In Cecil Kunder's account, the beginnings of Mickey Mouse merchandising can

be traced to three events. In late 1929, Walt Disney sold the rights to use Mickey on school tablets to a New York company. In January 1930, Charlotte Clark began the small-scale production of Mickey Mouse dolls in a house rented by the Disney Company. And finally, and most importantly, in February 1930, Disney signed a contract with the George Borgfeldt Company for the international licensing, production, and distribution of Mickey Mouse merchandise.<sup>3</sup> Although the Disney Company was never satisfied with Borgfeldt's efforts, the merchandising of Mickey Mouse was soon astoundingly successful. By the beginning of 1932 there were twenty-one licensees in the United States alone, most producing a number of different Mickey Mouse products. Children could, with enough money, have the image of the mouse on almost all of their possessions—their underwear, pajamas, neckties, handkerchiefs, and jewelry; their toothbrushes, hot water bottles, and bathroom accessories; their silverware and china; their toys and games; and their school supplies.<sup>4</sup>

The Disney Company was interested in the publicity value of these items as much as the substantial royalties they would generate. As Roy Disney noted in a letter to Borgfeldt, "The sale of a doll to any member of a household is a daily advertisement in that household for our cartoons and keeps them all 'Mickey Mouse Minded.'" <sup>5</sup> When Borgfeldt's Carl Sollmann expressed his concern that business would be hurt by the saturation of the market with Disney toys, Roy Disney replied, "we feel that we should publicize our character from every angle and accept every opportunity."<sup>6</sup> Sollmann looked at the toy business as a producer; Disney looked at it more as an advertiser. The more publicity the better.

In this sense, Disney and Borgfeldt's interests were complementary more than convergent. They were each interested in consolidating half of the circuit between the two forms of consumption noted above. For Disney, the consumption of the toy would lead to the consumption of the movie; for Borgfeldt, the consumption of the movie would lead to the consumption of the toy. At the local level at which consumption actually took place, this network might better be described as a path, a path that connected the worlds of film exhibition and retailing, and therefore led (in its ideal form at least) from the movie theater to the department store and back. The activities in these two spaces were, as we shall see, strategically linked.

In 1931 and 1932, Mickey Mouse became a fixture in department stores across the country. Mickey Mouse items began to be grouped together in toy departments, and given their own separate displays.<sup>7</sup> And Mickey Mouse became the prominent figure in store windows targeted at the young consumer. The toy trade press of these years reproduced numerous store windows built around Mickey and Minnie Mouse, windows at Gimbel Brothers' in Philadelphia, Kresge's in Newark, Nugent's in St. Louis,

lock's in Los Angeles, Stearn's in Cleveland and Bloomingdale's, Lord and Taylor's, Stern Brothers' and the Grand Central Toy Shop in New York.<sup>8</sup> The following description, from 1932, gives some sense of the spectacular nature of these windows:

For stopping crowds, O'Connor-Moffatt certainly took the prize for the early trade. The wonderful Mickey Mouse show with Minnie Mouse at the piano, and a world of little Mickey's and other animals about, caught and held constant crowds. Meanwhile a talking machine mechanism, attached by a vibrating mechanism to the windows, gave out a cheerful mousey melody to the bystanders on either side of the corner.<sup>9</sup>

Mickey Mouse became a kind of star of the toy department, around which could be assembled a large supporting cast of other dolls and toys. This was particularly evident in the description of the Christmas festivities for children at Kresge's in 1932. Mickey Mouse passed out presents and acted as "master of ceremonies" for a show in the Mickey Mouse Barn on the fifth floor. And on the sixth floor, Mickey introduced Santa and Mrs. Claus, who were placed on thrones in the rear of the toy department's Mickey Mouse section.

Borgfeldt helped organize a certain amount of this publicity for its products. It built a Mickey Mouse booth at Bloomingdale's, provided fake cheeses for Mickey Mouse window displays, and had Charlotte Clark make costumes so that Mickey and Minnie could appear "live" at the store. But it seems that much of the impetus for these extravagant promotions came from the stores themselves.

The stores' enthusiasm for Mickey Mouse is not difficult to understand given the popularity of the films and the early signs of the toys' success. The less obvious source of this enthusiasm should be stressed, however. The toy industry's greatest problem during this period was that it was not so much of a seasonal business; the majority of purchases took place in the month before Christmas and the rest of the year was comparatively slow. The trade struggled to find ways to overcome this problem. For the toy industry to flourish, the child's consumption patterns had to be demystified, wrested from the stranglehold of the yearly ritual and connected to other rituals and, particularly, to the flux of everyday life. The movies played an important role in most stores' efforts for year-round sales. One Kansas store explained its success in this regard by pointing to its window displays that tied in with movies at the local theaters. *Playthings*, the trade paper for the toy industry, explained the extra stock dividends that Lord and Taylor paid by noting the store's unique window displays that included, as an example, a Mickey Mouse window.<sup>10</sup> By tying toys

to movies, stores tied the consumption of toys to the everyday rituals of moviegoing, and a different kind of temporality. Mickey Mouse, as a regularly recurring character, was especially suited for this strategy.

Mickey Mouse was also important in the toy industry's efforts to generate other yearly rituals, notably Children's Day in June and Mickey Mouse's birthday in October. *Playthings*, in fact, urged stores to arrange Mickey Mouse birthday parties as a way of livening up a dull season. It specifically encouraged stores to cooperate with local movie theaters and to offer to dress up their lobbies with a display of Mickey Mouse toys. Here the theater became quite explicitly an extension of the department store.<sup>11</sup>

If the department stores' activities served as an elaborate advertisement for Mickey Mouse films, the theater's activities served as an equally elaborate advertisement for the department stores and particularly for Mickey Mouse toys. The films themselves, of course, popular as they were, served as such an advertisement. But to these films we must add another set of practices, the display and giveaway of Mickey Mouse toys at the theaters. By 1931, at least, theaters across the country had begun to receive a stream of Mickey Mouse dolls and toys for display and giveaways. These were occasionally supplied by Disney, Borgfeldt, or Columbia, the studio that distributed Disney films, or bought by the theater itself, but, in what seems to have been the standard formula, they were also supplied by individual department stores.<sup>12</sup> Stores got involved through the most elegant scheme of Mickey Mouse merchandising of the period, the Mickey Mouse Clubs.

The principal elements of the Mickey Mouse Club scheme were outlined in a general campaign booklet published in 1930 by the Disney Company. According to the plan, exhibitors would arrange a series of Saturday matinees for children, organizing the audience for these matinees into a club built around the character of Mickey Mouse. Each matinee, or "meeting" of the club would consist of a Mickey Mouse cartoon, followed by the introduction of the club's officers, the recitation of the Mickey Mouse Club Creed, the singing of "America," a stage show and/or contest, the Mickey Mouse Club Yell, the Mickey Mouse Club Song and then, finally, the films featured for the day.<sup>13</sup>

The club programs were not designed simply to appeal to children, but to incorporate as fully as possible the cultural activities of children within a community. Children enrolled in local music, dance, and dramatic schools, for instance, found themselves drawn or directed to the Mickey Mouse Clubs, because the stage shows were used as showcases for their talent. Marble shooting contests, doll dressing contests, model airplane making contests, ice-cream eating contests, Easter egg hunts, and dog parades functioned similarly, taking interests and activities unrelated to

viegoing and incorporating them into the flow of the matinee. Some even tried to bring outdoor activities, which were seen as the greatest threat to children's attendance on Saturdays, within their orbit by sponsoring baseball teams or summer picnics.

The clubs extended their reach in another way, by forming networks of tie-ins with local businesses that catered to children. Department stores, candy stores, banks, newspapers, and sporting goods stores—all businesses that served as points of contact between children and the world of commerce—became potential sponsors. Sponsors split the cost of running the clubs, and in return received advertising at club meetings and the right to use the image of Mickey Mouse in their store windows and newspaper ads.

Tie-ins with department stores were the most common. Those tie-ins linked the club's activities with the selling of toys quite effectively. To join the club, children had to go to the department store's toy department to get an application. At club meetings, the department store's sponsorship would be noted, and the latest Mickey Mouse toys would be given away to a handful of very lucky children. The rest of the children would then covet the toys and, ideally, figure out a way to return to the store to buy one.

The growth of the Mickey Mouse Clubs was impressive. By the end of 1930, a hundred and fifty theaters across the country had clubs and, according to Disney's estimates, there were a hundred and fifty to two hundred thousand members.<sup>14</sup> By 1932, *Photoplay* magazine claimed that the clubs had one million members.<sup>15</sup> Although these figures may overestimate actual membership, they are credible. Between 1930 and 1932, newspapers, the national trade press, and the semimonthly "Official Bulletin of the Mickey Mouse Club" chronicled the successes of the clubs in every part of the country. Milwaukee alone had ten clubs and twenty thousand members. Chicago had at least twenty-five clubs. Los Angeles still more.<sup>16</sup> In 1932, new club chapters were being formed at the rate of about thirty per month. A writer in the *Motion Picture Herald* noted that the membership of the Mickey Mouse Club approximated that of the Boy Scouts of America and the Girl Scouts combined.<sup>17</sup> The idea of a children's cinema club was not an original one. The *Daily Yearbook* had recommended juvenile booster clubs in its *Exhibition Guides* in the three years prior to 1930, so it is very likely that exhibitors had been experimenting with the idea for some time. In 1927, the *Exhibitor's Herald* devoted an article to an "Our Gang" Club that had been organized by a Chicago exhibitor. That club, perhaps others like it, existed as a precedent for a children's club based on the characters in a short subject film series.<sup>18</sup> The Mickey Mouse Club was not, in any case, the only children's

cinema club operating between 1930 and 1933. The Loew's and Warner Bros. theater circuits had kiddie clubs during these years, and dozens, if not hundreds, of individual theater managers devised their own clubs. The Capitol Theater Booster Club, the Indians are Coming Club, the Do Right Club, the Young-Timers and the Ancient Order of the Tom Cats are among many mentioned in the trades.<sup>19</sup>

All of the clubs worked to consolidate around the moviegoing experience what Daniel Boorstin has called consumption communities.<sup>20</sup> What set the Mickey Mouse Clubs apart from these other clubs was the extent to which they organized these communities not only around the consumption of movies but also around the consumption of toys. It is significant that the toy press during these years was encouraging toy departments to organize children's clubs to promote year-round sales. Mickey Mouse clubs, designed by Disney and run by theater managers, provided them an ideal, ready-made vehicle to achieve these goals.<sup>21</sup>

The picture I have drawn is far from complete, but it does give some sense of the elaborate ways that the child was interpellated as consumer through the merchandising of Mickey Mouse. At this point it is possible to return to the question of address, and ask what if any relationship existed between this merchandising, the broad debates about the movies and children, and the canonization of Mickey Mouse.

Let me begin by merely noting that the merchandising of Mickey Mouse toys to children seems to have proceeded in the early 1930s without any criticism from reformers. I would like to suggest that this is more perplexing than it may, on its surface, seem. The Mickey Mouse films, after all, elicited at least scattered signs of resistance. And the values of consumerism were contested from a variety of fronts during the period. Daniel Horowitz has traced the history of moral arguments against consumerism, arguments which, in the 1920s and 1930s, centered on the middle class's susceptibility and conformity to standardized culture.<sup>22</sup> And Roland Marchand has described the ambivalence that even advertisers felt when contemplating the logic of waste and extravagance that characterized consumerism.<sup>23</sup> Today, of course, activists reflexively bring these kinds of arguments to the merchandising of cartoon character toys. They did not, however, bring such arguments to the merchandising of Mickey Mouse in the early 1930s; nor do they generally bring those arguments to Mickey today. It is important to ask: Why not?

It would be misleading to say that issues of consumerism did not enter into the debates over the cinema and children during this period. In fact, most reformist discourse in the first decades of the century related fairly directly to the child's new status as a consumer of films. The movies were part of a new marketplace of culture to which children had unprecedented access. Their freedom of choice as consumers blurred traditional distinc-

is between child and adult culture, and placed the authority that parents and teachers had normally had in the socialization of children in crisis. Numerous studies done of children's movie attendance and movie preferences reveal a fundamental concern with the effects of consumerism. The studies, moreover, called critical attention to the ability of movies to prompt desires for the products they picture, especially products such as cigarettes and clothing.<sup>24</sup>

But it is clear that ancillary products relating to Mickey Mouse were an issue. In fact, it can be argued that these products played an important role in naturalizing Disney animation's address to children, consolidating the sacred bond I mentioned earlier. I would like to offer a broad and brief explanation for this, explanations for the ways in which the reading of toys worked to consolidate Disney animation's address to children.

The first has to do with the new valuation of play in the first decades of the century. Both the film industry and the toy industry were singled out in the 1920s and 1930s as arenas of reform. There are, in fact, some interesting parallels between reform activity in the two industries. Reformers in both arenas stressed character education, criticized the glorification of gunplay, and produced elaborate age-grading schemes to guide children's consumption. However, there is a particularly striking difference between the voices of reform in the two industries. The vision of toy reformers is obviously a much more affirmative one. Very few specific toys are criticized, and though the distinction between educational and noneducational toys is frequently made, the former category was quite large and its boundaries not well defined. The rhetoric of toy reformers is informed by the idea that play itself, in itself, was valuable for the child.<sup>25</sup>

A 1931 article in *Toys and Novelties* reveals for us the ways that the demands of reform and the dictates of consumerism could so unproblematically converge around toys:

We are continually purchasing new toys for our kiddies because we believe it is one of the finest investments we could possibly make toward their proper growth and development. It is up to you to sell the same idea to every home in America.<sup>26</sup>

A similarly general statement during this period about "continually sending the child to the movies" would have sounded ludicrous. In 1934, Mickey Mouse Doll houses, playhouses, pencil sets, paint sets, dial phones, and game sets were put forward as evidence that Mickey had turned education.<sup>27</sup> In fact, not all of these toys are obviously educational. But, according to the rhetoric of the day, toys generally were educational. For this reason,

the toys offered more solid ground on which to assure the sacredness of Mickey Mouse's address to children than did the films.

A second explanation centers on the ideology implicit in the iconography of toys, an iconography shared by animation. Mary Ann Doane has examined the intertwining of identification and object choice—being and having—in the female spectator's simultaneous address by the movies and consumerism.<sup>28</sup> Although the comparison holds some dangers, it is clear that a similar sort of intertwining occurs in children's address by Mickey Mouse films and toys. This is illustrated most vividly in the widespread popularity of Mickey Mouse playsuits, which allowed children to dress up as Mickey or Minnie Mouse. Photos of Mickey Mouse Club activities typically show the officers dressed in such costumes. Members, in fact, were instructed to greet one another by saying "Hi Mickey!" or "Hi Minnie!" What does it mean for a child to "be" a mouse? And what does it mean for a child to "have" a mouse? During the early decades of the century, as today, there was an enormous cultural investment in the association of childhood with animality. The most lauded forms of children's culture—toys, zoos, circuses, children's literature—were built on that investment, and the structured set of fantasies it offered.

The animalization of the juvenile world arguably had a very specific and powerful function in relation to the changing historical construction of childhood in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This might be explained broadly through reference to the increasing currency of Romanticism, which linked the child with nature. Jackson Lears has identified two strains in the new construction of childhood that follow from links Romanticism made between childhood and nature. In the first, nature was a way of establishing children's innocence, their distance from the corrupting influence of social life. In the second, nature was a way of establishing children's vitality, their distance from the stultifying elements of social life. The child's relationship with nature and its association with innocence on the one hand and primitivist vitality on the other could be effectively concretized through symbolic procedures that linked the child to animals.<sup>29</sup>

The fantasy positions laid out (for both children and adults) in the association of children with animals circulated around and conflated two paradigmatic distinctions, that between child and adult and that between animal and human. Reformers were interested in conserving the set of traditional distinctions between child and adult, which the cinema presumably blurred. One way of bringing those distinctions back into focus was to superimpose them on the more culturally stable distinction between animals and humans. That is what the association of animals and children worked to do.<sup>30</sup>

We may look to the work of G. Stanley Hall for a more specific sense

of the context in which the connection between animals and children gained its significance. Hall's writing at the turn of the century melded romantic notions of childhood with theories about evolution and psychological development. As a founder of the Child Studies Movement in this country, Hall was an instrumental force in articulating and carrying forward central tendencies in the discourses of reform. His theories held that at the various stages of the child's development recapitulated, through genetically inscribed memory, the history of the race. Therefore, childhood recapitulated the social and instinctual impulses of the so-called Age of Savagery, while adolescence similarly recapitulated the Age of Chivalry. Proper parental and educational guidance avoided the "omnipresent dangers of precocity" by guiding the child through each stage of its development and by encouraging, at each stage, the proper exercise of the tendencies of the race's past. The child that did not fully live out its savage impulses would be scarred in its development and therefore unable to function properly as an adult in the modern world.<sup>31</sup>

This paleopsychic theory gave animals a very special place in the consideration of childhood, for it held that at the earliest stages of the race's development, humans were very close to animals. Therefore, Hall would argue, "children . . . in their incomplete stage of development are nearer the animals in some respects than they are to adults."<sup>32</sup> The tendency to anthropomorphize animals is established as a particular result of the child's ancestral link with animals.

To the young child, there is no gap between his soul and the soul of animals. They think, feel, act much as he does. They love, hate, fear, learn, sleep, make toilets, sympathize and have nearly all of the basal psychic qualities that the child has.<sup>33</sup>

Hall's description of the paleopsychic connection between children and animals becomes the basis for his argument for the centrality of animals in education. As Hall puts it,

Just as man's development would have been very different without animals and the fishing, hunting and pastoral stages, so childhood is maimed if long robbed of its due measure of influences from this comprehensive arsenal of educational material. Instead, I can almost believe that, if pedagogy is ever to become adequate to the needs of the soul the time will come when animals will play a far larger educational role than has as yet been conceived, that they will be curricularized, will require a new and higher humanistic or culture value in the future comparable with their utility in the past.<sup>34</sup>

Hall therefore pleads for "menageries . . . in every public park, pets, familiarity with stables, for school museums of stuffed specimens," and for "instruction in every school concerning insects, birds and animals. . . ."<sup>35</sup> He might as well have called for Mickey Mouse. Although Hall's chapter gives some clues about the ways that animals can serve the needs of scientific, psychological, and moral education, it is clear that he is concerned not with ends so much as means, that is, with the contact that is established and maintained between the child and the world of animals.

What is particularly important to note here is that animals tended to link children to a different time. Johannes Fabian has argued that the West has constituted the other as occupying not simply a different space (conceived geographically, hierarchically, or taxonomically) but a different time. Such distinctions as nature/culture, traditional/modern, and child/adult (and we might add animal/human) are central to Western society as temporalizing strategies.

The world of toys was built around this primitivist impulse. It was a world of animals, racial others, and figures from the near or distant past. The playsuits available during the period—the Indian, Cowboy, Scout, and Mickey Mouse suits—all depend on this impulse. Yet we must admit that the Mickey Mouse films and the Mickey character itself were in many ways aggressively modern. In fact, children during this period were in many ways on the very cutting edge of modernity. Reformers were disturbed about the movies in large part because the cultural construction of childhood had traditionally depended so much on the child's association with the past. Generally, for them, the more modern a film, the less suitable it was for children. Mickey's association with animality and particularly with the iconography of toys worked to counterbalance his modernity and place him more on the side of traditional childhood.

In *The World of Goods*, Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood have argued that the primary function of goods is to make "visible" and stable the categories of culture.<sup>36</sup> Film reformers acknowledged this view in their refusal to demonize consumerism and oppose it to notions of traditional childhood. These reformers were preoccupied with the cinema's address to children because the cinema mixed adults and children and called into question the hallowed distinction between the two. They were particularly concerned with adolescence because that was where the distinction became particularly problematic. If, as I have argued, the merchandising of Mickey Mouse toys was important in making sacred Disney's address to children, it is because that merchandising worked more assuredly than the movies to push the image of the child back into traditional categories of childhood.

- of the theme park, Disney management style, etc.—in other areas of Japan probably would not work because the success of Tokyo Disneyland is inseparable from the 1980s' transformation of Tokyo into a postmodern city.
15. Of course, it is questionable whether such notions as "original" and "authentic" have any meaning in relation to Disneyland. If we want to be more accurate, we have to say the "original simulacrum" and the "authentic simulation of America," which are, however, mere oxymora. See Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, "The Postmodern and Mass Images in Japan," *Public Culture*, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 8–25.
  16. In 1983, the opening year of Tokyo Disneyland, nine percent of the visitors were from neighboring Asian countries. Terry Trucco, "How Disneyland beat all the odds in Japan," *Advertising Age* (September 6, 1984), p. 16.
  17. Stephen F. Mills, "Disney and the Promotions of Synthetic Worlds," *American Studies International*, vol. XXVIII, No. 2 (October 1990), p. 73.
  18. Margaret Crawford, "The World in a Shopping Mall," in Michael Sorkin, ed., *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992), pp. 3–4.
  19. Michael Sorkin, "See You In Disneyland," in *Variations on a Theme Park*, p. 216.
  20. Donna Haraway, *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (New York: Routledge, 1989), p. 251.
  21. Haraway, *Primate Visions*, p. 254.
  22. Kato Shuichi, *Hybrid Culture: Japan's Small Hope (Zasshu bunka: Nihon no chiisana kibo)*, (Tokyo: Kodansha bunko, 1974). In the essay titled "Hybridity of Japanese Culture," which was originally published in 1955, Kato convincingly shows not only that those purists who advocate a return to Japanese tradition are entrenched in Western material culture, but also that a conceptual framework in which the discourse on pure Japanese tradition is discussed is itself already a "translation culture" (*honyaku bunka*) borrowed from the West. However, he does not elaborate on the impossibility of the second form of purification, complete Westernization of Japan. Does this reluctance to explicate why absolute Westernization of Japan is impossible have something to do with Kato's attempt to create a new binary opposition between the absolute purity of Western—specifically, English and French—culture and the absolute hybridity of Japanese culture? By insisting on the existence of this binary opposition, doesn't Kato in the end reassert the uniqueness of Japanese culture which he tries to deconstruct?
  23. Donna J. Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991).
  24. Maruyama Masao, *Nihon no shiso* (Tokyo: Iwanami shinsho, 1961).

### 13. The Mickey in Macy's Window: Childhood, Consumerism, and Disney Animation

1. Charles Eckert, "The Carol Lombard in Macy's Window," *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, vol. 3, No. 1 (Winter 1978), pp. 1–22.
2. For an excellent bibliography of much of this work, see Lynn Spigel and Denise Mann, "Women and Consumer Culture: A Selective Bibliography," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, vol. 11, No. 1 (1989), pp. 85–105.
3. Cecil Muncie, *Disneyana: Walt Disney Collectibles* (New York: Hawthorne Books, 1974), pp. 85–105.

- Official Bulletin of the Mickey Mouse Club*, 1 January 1932, p. 4.
- Letter from Roy Disney to Carl Sollmann, March 4, 1941. Unless otherwise noted, all letters are from the Borgfeldt Files, the Walt Disney Archives.
- Letter from Carl Sollmann to Walt Disney, March 27, 1931.
- Letter from Carl Sollmann to Roy O. Disney, August 27, 1931.
- Toys and Novelties* (December 1932), p. 42 (September 1931), p. 66 (October 1931), pp. 41–45; *Playthings* (October 1931), pp. 60, 90 (January 1932), pp. 117, 159 (December 1932), pp. 23, 43.
- Playthings* (December 1932), p. 33.
- Toys and Novelties* (January 1929), p. 290; *Playthings* (December 1932) p. 49. Of course, much could be said about the ways in which the aesthetics of window dressing borrowed from the aesthetics of the movies.
- Playthings* (July 1932), p. 47 (October 1932), p. 83.
- Film Daily* (April 12, 1931), unpaginated clipping, Disney Archives; Carl Sollmann to Walt Disney Productions, December 8, 1930; Carl Sollmann to Walt Disney Productions, May 13, 1931; Walt Disney Productions to Carl Sollmann, September 27, 1930.
- "General Campaign Covering the Launching and Operation of the Mickey Mouse Club, An Organization for Boys and Girls," 1930.
- Letter from George E. Morris to Carl Sollmann, September 2, 1930.
- Photoplay Magazine* (June 1932), p. 46.
- "Official Bulletin of the Mickey Mouse Club," April 1, 1932, and *Greater Amusements* (April 21, 1931), unpaginated clipping, Disney Archives.
- Motion Picture Herald* (October 1, 1932), quoted in Cecil Muncie, *Disneyana*, p. 102.
- "Theatres Form Matinee Clubs and Business Begins to Soar," *Exhibitor's Herald* (November 12, 1927), p. 41. The precedent of children's clubs based on predominantly noncinematic fictional characters should also be noted here. See the discussion of the Tribes of Tarzan in Eugene Provenzo, *Edgar Rice Burroughs: The Man Who Created Tarzan* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1975). For an overview of commercial children's clubs in the 1930s, see E. Evalyn Grumbine, *Reaching Juvenile Markets* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1938), pp. 176–195.
- See the following clippings in the Disney Archives: *Motion Picture Daily* (January 16, 1931); *Variety* (November 5, 1930), p. 745; *Exhibitor's Herald World* (October 18, 1930), p. 63; *Motion Picture Herald* (January 3, 1931), pp. 121, 126.
- Daniel Boorstin, *The Americans: The Democratic Experience* (New York: Random House, 1973).
- For a more detailed account of the Mickey Mouse Clubs see my article, "Tracing the Child Audience: The Case of Disney, 1929–1933," in *Prima del codici 2: Alle porte de Hays* (La Biennale de Venezia, 1991), pp. 213–223.
- Daniel Horowitz, *The Morality of Spending: Attitudes Toward the Consumer Society in America, 1875–1940* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), pp. 134–166.
- Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 134–166.
24. See, for instance, Harold O. Berg, "One Week's Attendance of Children at Motion Picture Entertainments," *Playground* (June 1923), p. 165; Clarence Arthur Perry, "Frequency of Attendance of High-School Students at the Movies," *School Review* (October 1923), pp. 573–587; and Henry James Forman, *Our Movie-Made Children* (New York: Macmillan, 1933), pp. 12–27, 183–190.
  25. There are obvious connections between the discourse around toys and the rhetoric of the play movement. Notable work on the play movement includes Dominick Cavallo, *Muscles and Morals: Organized Playgrounds and Urban Reform, 1880–1920* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981); David Glassberg, "Restoring a 'Forgotten Childhood': American Play and the Progressive Era's Elizabethan Past," *American Quarterly*, vol. 32, No. 4 (1980), pp. 351–368; Stephen Hardy and Alan Ingham, "Games, Structures, and Agency: Historians on the American Play Movement," *Journal of Social History*, vol. 17, No. 2 (1983), pp. 285–301; and Alessandra Lorini, "The Progressives' Rhetoric on National Recreation: The Play Movement in New York City (1880–1917)," *Storia Nordamericana*, vol. 1, No. 1 (1984), pp. 334–371.
  26. *Toys and Novelties* (February 1931), p. 223.
  27. *New York American* (December 9, 1934), unpaginated clippings, Disney Archives.
  28. Mary Ann Doane, *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940's* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), pp. 22–33.
  29. T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880–1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), pp. 144–149.
  30. Little historical or theoretical work has been done on the representation of animals in the cinema. In the early 1980s, Raymond Bellour's Paris seminar focused attention on animality and the articulation of sexual difference in films such as *Bringing Up Baby*, though Bellour has not, to my knowledge, published any of his work in this area. Anne Friedberg organized an innovative panel, "The Other Species: Animals and Film," for the 1990 Society for Cinema Studies Conference, with papers by Friedberg, Kay Armatage, Marsha Kinder, and Holly Kruse. Finally, Ariel Dorfman's work on comic strips and animation offers a number of suggestive insights on this topic. See Ariel Dorfman, *The Empire's Old Clothes* (New York: Pantheon Press, 1983), and Dorfman and Armand Mattelart, *How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic*, David Kunzle, trans. (New York: International General, 1975).
  31. G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence*, two volumes (New York: Arno Press, 1969). See also Lears, *No Place of Grace*, pp. 146–149.
  32. Hall, *Adolescence*, vol. 2, p. 221.
  33. *Ibid.*, p. 220.
  34. *Ibid.*, pp. 227–228.
  35. *Ibid.*, pp. 220–221.
  36. Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood, *The World of Goods* (New York: Basic Books, 1979), p. 59.
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1. Janet Staiger, *Interpreting Films: Studies in the Historical Reception of American Cinema* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992). See especially pp. 45–48 for a discussion of the basic concepts of "Context-Activated Theories"